

May 9, 2019

Dear Search Committee,

I am writing to express my interest for the position of Superintendent of Indianapolis public schools. I am an educator with over 19 years of experience in the field, including 11 years in school and district administrative roles. I specialize in developing highly effective school administrators through advanced use of data to drive academic success via personalized learning. I spent the last couple of years working to identify why achievement gaps exist. What I have come to learn is that achievement gaps exist for two reasons. The first reason is that many minority students are not afforded the same opportunities as their counterparts in public education. This leads to an opportunity gap. Secondly, opportunities are not offered because there is a strong expectation gap that exists through implicit biases that we all have. My interest in the IPS is based off the hallmark continuous improvement that Indianapolis public school consistently seeks regardless of the many challenges. It would be an honor to serve in a community and district where high expectations are the norm. As a minority urban school leader, I will be able to connect students and staff across all races through culturally responsive practices through equitable policies and strategic implementation. I would love to be a part of such a strong and committed learning community. Together we can continue to build on the success and become a national model of excellence in equity education.

Currently I serve as Chief of Schools for neighboring Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky. Indianapolis has similar racial makeup as Jefferson County. My responsibilities are to lead and support all 172 schools which serve 101,000 students. My leadership team includes six Assistant Superintendents and the Executive Administrator for Student Assignment to help drive the work and lead the three new pillars of the district. They consist of the Racial Equity Policy, deeper learning through Backpack of Skills and Six Systems for Instructional Success. Through this work we are rapidly closing the achievement gap for all of our students. In addition we are a Compassionate school district where 20 of our campuses provide social and emotional curriculum for the entire school.

In my former position as Deputy Superintendent with the East Saint Louis School District, I oversaw the daily workings of all public and charter schools and handled the School Improvement Grant (SIG) turnaround initiatives as well as budgets for all campuses. I also managed the entire curriculum department and led numerous district-wide initiatives ranging from Restorative Practices to the development of the new Urban Education Teacher Residency Program in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education, the Academy for Urban School Leadership and National Louis University. We have used Restorative Practices as the tool to deeply and positively impact the culture across K-12 grades

within the East Saint Louis School District. Suspension rates decreased from 32% in 2015 to 15% in 2018. In addition, I led the advancement of our district-wide professional development program with New Leaders to ensure all school administrators are equipped with the skills necessary to be highly effective in their roles. Most importantly graduation rates increased from 59% in 2012 to 77% in 2018, while 98% of all graduates for the last four years had been accepted into college.

My colleagues and stakeholders value me as both a visionary leader and as a resource guide that offers practical tools for their toolbox combined with constructive feedback. I am a natural-born leader who has also honed extensive leadership and motivational skills to best support my team. I truly function at an elite level by collaborating and running highly structured meetings and ensuring well-organized, frequent two-way communication. I value varied perspectives from all stakeholders and strive to keep my staff unified to obtain our goals. I have strong conflict resolution skills through the use of the TREGOE situational analysis. As an experienced educator committed to closing the achievement gap, I utilize extensive critical thinking and problem-solving skills. I handle all issues with professionalism among staff and stakeholders when they arise. I have earned the respect of colleagues and communities from the district as well as throughout the nation for my innovation and accountability systemic processes. My experience also includes deep levels of engagement and partnership with all stakeholders.

I would like to bring my professionalism, commitment and knowledge to the students, staff and families of the Indianapolis Public Schools as your Superintendent. I assure you that I am a superior candidate for the position of Superintendent and look forward to meeting with you to discuss my competence in depth. Thank you for your time and careful review of my application.

Educationally Yours,

Devon Horton, Ed.D.